



## **Migration and Educational Strategies**

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## **Migration and Educational Strategies – a comparative analysis of territorial stigmatisation, racialisation and schooling in urban environments in France and Denmark**

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### **Abstract**

In this paper, educational strategies among immigrant youngsters will be analysed in a comparative perspective. Based on empirical studies from the EDUMIGROM project, the aim of the paper is to illuminate the patterns of educational strategies in relation to changing social, cultural and symbolic societal forces. Empirical samples from my comparative studies, including immigrant youngsters from France will be included in the analysis.

### **Introduction**

Based on the major findings from the EDUMIGROM research project (2008-2011) this paper will apply an analytical approach that aims at reveal how the prevailing important factors of racial and residential segregation intersect in producing and reproducing disadvantages of young immigrants in compulsory education. Based on empirical materials from the selected Danish and French cases the focus is on how immigrant students' educational strategies are related to the symbolic and social order of local residential areas and become superimposed onto the stigmata of ethnicity. Inspired by Loïc Wacquant (2007, 2008a, 2008b), among others, this symbolic work around schooling will be conceptualised in relation to mechanisms of territorial stigmatisation in the age of advanced marginality.

The paper is divided in three parts. The first part delineates Wacquant's theoretical contribution to the modality of territorial stigmatisation and the additional concept of racialisation followed by an empirical analysis of residential segregation, inequality of schooling and ethno-racial segregation in the selected Danish and French cases. In the third and final section, I conclude and offer a discussion of the work of Wacquant while rethinking the implications for research into schooling strategies among young immigrants and the mechanisms of territorial and ethno-racial stigmatisation via the functioning of school institutions.

### **Territorial stigmatisation and racialisation**

Territorial stigmatisation is a novel dimension of inequality and urban marginality in both the USA and Europe on the brink of the new century. This new social reality, Wacquant argues, is generated by the scarcity and instability of work as well as the changing role of the state that is, moreover confused by what he describes as the ethnicised idiom of immigration, discrimination and 'diversity'. Wacquant's attention is paid to ethnicisation as a mechanism of how issues of 'immigration' and 'ethnic minority discrimination' are pushed forward as prominent social problems that serve to hide the more important social problem of insecure work and its consequences of the formation of marginal urban population (Wacquant 2008a, 116).

Fundamentally, territorial stigmatisation is a socio-spatial order determined by the dualizing hierarchy of class and place, thus breaking with the errors concerning place inscribed in substantialist thought about place via an analysis of the relations between the structures of social space and those of physical space. His overall theory of advanced urban marginality is developed as 'a theoretically guided empirical comparison of the (hyper)ghetto of Chicago and the (post-industrial) working-class periphery of Paris as of the early 1990' (Wacquant 2008b, 166). Even though the *banlieues* are considered to be enclaves of pluri-ethnic zones with a high concentration of immigrants and their descendants, it is crucial to indicate that ghettos and *banlieues* are the legacies of different urban trajectories and arise from different forms of social classification; while social classification in the French working-class *banlieues* primarily proceeds on the basis of class position, moderated by ethnic categories and categorisations, and mitigated by public policy and institutions, in the black American ghettos social classification occurs more readily on the basis of a historically ethno-racial membership.

Wacquant has taken his concept of stigma from Erving Goffman and Pierre Bourdieu, respectively, to highlight how the public disgrace afflicting these 'problem areas' devalues their residents' sense of self and corrodes their social ties (Wacquant 2008a, 116). He argues that territorial stigma is akin to the third type of stigma developed by Goffman of 'race, nation and religion' because they can both be transmitted through lineage and can easily affect all members of an ethnic group, kinship or family (Wacquant 2007, 67). Moreover, he builds on Bourdieu's relational sociology that calls attention to the search for homologue relations between social, spatial and mental structures. Consequently, it is investigated how social space, at once inscribed in spatial structures and in mental structures that are produced partly by the incorporation of these structures, is the site where power is stressed and, no doubt in its subtlest form, as symbolic violence that goes unperceived as violence (Bourdieu et al. 1999, 126).

In the Danish (research) context there has been a reluctance to address ethnic and social inequality in terms of race or racism (e.g. Kampman 2006). Inequality of race, or the concept of 'raced minoritisation' (Gilborn & Ladson-Billings 2017, 27), is however an important analytical tool to understand the mechanisms of those groups who, because of racism are excluded from the political, economic and educational mainstream. One case of illumination is the public debate about 'the white flight from secondary education (gymnasium)' (2018). What is striking is how an earlier heated discussion of how to increase the proportion of 'immigrants' continuing in secondary education – an increase from 8,1 percent in 2006 to 11,3 percent in 2016), has been turned around to a question of certain schools with too many immigrants. In a case where some students – just because they are immigrants or descendants from non-Western countries – are described not only as a burden that disturbs the mainstream, but also as 'burden' that has to be regulated and controlled (in number), is in my view, only reasonable within a subtle system of 'raced minoritisation': How to just blame a certain group of students' because of their attendance without paying attention to their actual schooling? How is this problematisation of immigrant students and immigrant schools legitimized?

Race and racialisation, Paul Gilroy argues, is a form of power relation embedded in the history of European nation building that originates from recognition of the way that Britain's languages of 'race' and nation have been articulated together. Race and racism are as such related to a powerful dimension of social differentiation that exerts on shaping social, economic and cultural relations and designating unequal positions. Moreover, Gilroy is arguing against the 'cultural diversity regime' which affirms blackness as an open signifier and seeks to celebrate complex

representations of black particularity internally divided by class, gender, sexuality and age (2009, 565). In next section, I delineate the conceptualisation of territorial stigmatization, ethnicization, race and racialisation (raced minoritisation) as a background to the empirical analysis.

### **The Danish and French empirical cases**

The Danish and French cases are selections from a total of nine country studies by EDUMIGROM. While I have been in charge of the Danish country study (Thomsen, Moldenhawer and Kallehave 2010; Moldenhawer, Kallehave and Hansen 2010; Moldenhawer and Padovan-Özdemir 2011), I build on the findings from the country study reports made by the French research team (Feluzis et al. 2010; Schiff 2010a, 2010b, 2011). A comparative approach can be a powerful tool to ‘make the familiar strange and the strange familiar’ in order to highlight what we take for granted in our own ‘national context’ (Broadfoot 1999; Osborn et al. 2003, 24). The purpose of choosing the French case, in addition to the well-known Danish case, is to further unravel the interplay between school segregation and the varying forms of residential segregation, and how it affects the stigma attached to the image of ‘problem people’. I argue that France and Denmark are fruitful national cases for comparison because they differ substantially. First of all, Denmark’s educational system has historically been differentiated, specialised and decentralised, whereas the French system has been unified, systematised and centralised (Archer 1979; Schiff et al. 2008a). The cases furthermore differ concerning the relations between the public and the private, the individual and the collective, and marketisation (Moody and Thévenot 2000; Pedersen 2011; Raveaud and van Zanten 2007), the colonial past and immigration history (Schiff et al. 2008b; Noiriel 1996), and the categorisation of ‘the immigrant’ linked to different models of citizenship (Jønsson and Petersen 2010; van Zanten 1997). The comparative approach aims to discern key invariants and variants in the social, spatial and mental structures of territorial and ethnic stigmatisation and schooling.

#### *Residential areas and the schools*

The scale of residential separation varied between the schools studied in Denmark and France, respectively.<sup>1</sup> While the two schools in Denmark are situated in a neighbourhood dominantly or exclusively inhabited by immigrant groups, or are located on the edge of a segregated ethnic minority community, the two schools in France are located in the same general catchment area providing education for students – depending on their course of study – who come from local neighbourhoods or from further away. The schools in France are located in a disadvantaged, working-class Parisian suburb of the Seine-Saint-Denis district with a proportion of immigrants higher than the national average. As a result of the choice of the residential area, the schools' student population is ethnically very diverse (especially immigrants<sup>2</sup> of Maghrebian origin, and from Turkey or the African continent), but socially rather homogeneous and of overwhelmingly lower-class position; with two thirds of the students having parents with a low or very low level of educational certification. One school is a mixed vocational and technological upper secondary school receiving a predominantly male population of close to 700 students. The school is positioned even lower in relation to other vocationally schools in the area, due to the fact that the socioeconomic background of the student body available for selection is even less favourable than the other schools. Moreover, the school is required to select students whose very poor academic performance makes it impossible for them to apply elsewhere (Schiff 2010a, 25).

The other school is a large technological and vocational school of over one thousand students (of both gender) surrounded by several disadvantaged public housing complexes that are well-known for their high rates of unemployment and crime. The school has strived to increase its position as a vocational high school by offering real employment opportunities and options for continuing to higher education, and moreover by opening one general class and several technical streams. However, this does not suffice to counteract the poor reputation associated with the

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<sup>1</sup> The third phase of the EDUMIGROM project focused on the minority groups that were selected in the countries for in-depth investigation. By applying a combination of methods (personal interviews and focus-group discussions with students, parents and teachers; classroom observations; ethnographic work in and outside the schools; and case studies on civil organisations), this qualitative phase of the study was intended to reveal the deep-laying motivations and dynamics of ethnic minority identity formation and the shaping of inter-ethnic relations. In each country, two urban communities were selected where the chosen ethnic minority groups were known to represent a substantial proportion of the local community. In Denmark and Sweden only one community was selected. It was aimed to identify established multi-ethnic communities that could be considered to be 'typical' in terms of their occupational structure and living and housing conditions, as well as in their composition by age and household formation. As a result, mostly working- or lower-class families were present in the communities. Thereafter, the hosting schools providing compulsory education for children in the community were selected. In this section of the paper I rely on the community study finding from one urban context and two schools in both Denmark and France.

<sup>2</sup> I use the term 'immigrants' in this section to point to the fact that the ethnic minority students of study are of different immigrant backgrounds.

immediate neighbourhood and the school's former status as a vocational school (ibid. 27). Consequently, the school environment has witnessed a similar 'moral panic' as delineated by Wacquant in his study of the '*banlieues*' (Wacquant 2008b, 138) because of its association with the French version of the 'ghetto' linked to social problems, poverty, unemployment, single-parent households and immigration, and its further association with the poor reputation of the immediate neighbourhood.

The two schools selected in Denmark are located in the same catchment area in the city of Copenhagen, but divided by two rather distinct neighbourhoods of different socioeconomic and ethnic compositions. Both are public schools.<sup>3</sup> One is located in an area dominated by the middle class and lower middle class, private housing and working-class rental apartments. Within the last year, the total number of students rose from 500 to 750, due to the closing of a neighbouring school dominated by students with an immigrant background. Consequently, the number of students with an immigrant background rose from 15 per cent to about 40 per cent. The other school is situated in a social housing area that is geographically isolated from the rest of the community. The student body of almost 475 almost exclusively comprises students with immigrant background and from lower social backgrounds. The two different neighbourhoods are further reflected in the very different levels of public and political attention paid to them. While the one neighbourhood seems to receive very limited public and political attention, the other is often referred to as a 'ghetto', and has since 2010 been included in the Government's outline of 'ghetto areas' in Denmark<sup>4</sup> (Ministry of social affairs and integration 2011, The Government 2018). Just to give an idea of the neighbourhood's relative socio-economic positioning, is the average salary per inhabitant (after tax) 146,000 crowns compared to 378,000 crowns in Copenhagen's wealthiest area.

This neighbourhood was built during a period from the 1950s to the 1970s and thought of as a model town offering 'a decent life' for all social groups. Two- and three-storey buildings dominated it with rental apartments organised around a public school and other welfare institutions. However, the development of an archetypical Danish model area with a clear character of unity and neighbourhood never became the healthy and differentiated social landscape it was meant to be (Gaardmand 1993, 50-51). During the 1970s, the first immigrants

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<sup>3</sup> Within the Danish educational system, a public school is a comprehensive school that integrates elementary, lower and upper secondary levels.

<sup>4</sup> In 2018, this area is besides being outlined as a ghetto area, it is defined as one of the 'hardest ghetto areas'.

moving to the neighbourhood were mainly Turkish guest workers, followed by family settlement from the 1980s. Today more than 60 per cent of the residents are immigrants and their descendants while 50 per cent of the adults are part of the workforce, which leaves another 50 per cent of adults with income from different types of social security schemes, such as early retirement, unemployment benefits or cash benefits for uninsured persons (Thomsen, Moldenhawer & Kallehave 2010). As it developed into a target area, economically marginalised and politically doomed as an outsider area, the neighbourhood has received massive attention and supplementary funding from the municipality, public housing corporations and NGOs in order to support 'integration' (Moldenhawer and Øland 2011).

### *Residential segregation and inequality of schooling*

The school system in France has, historically, been organised according to the ideas of universalism and republicanism. The State's obligation was to free its citizens from the influences of religion and to promote a strong national identity and social solidarity. This fundamental understanding of education as an institution to promote equal citizens of the Republic explains why the notion of differentiated teaching according to perceived needs is difficult to implement in a system strongly influenced by the formal national commitment to a unified system of provision. The school system in Denmark is different from the French system. Even though the curriculum within compulsory education has become even more centralised during the last decade, the school system has a strong tradition for communitarianism, which relies on a tradition of local democracy and social partnership (Osborn et al 2003, 38). Consequently, there is a strong emphasis on differentiating the education each individual receives, in order to give everyone, the best opportunities to develop according to their abilities within the Danish school system. On the other hand, in both Denmark and France there is a strong emphasis on the idea of egalitarianism; providing the same education for all, regardless of differences in family backgrounds. The fact is, however, that both inequality in education and school segregation exist in more or less subtle ways in both systems.

The pattern drawn by the case studies is that there are different ways of linking school segregation to forms of residential segregation. In France, it is rather exceptional to leave a given school district, while in Denmark parents exert a high degree of freedom in searching for the school that they consider the most appropriate for their child. However, it has been argued that French parents, in particular middle-class parents, do choose schools beyond the catchment area, either by sending their children to private schools or by moving close to the school they consider



best for their children, even though no official policy of choice exists (Raveaud and van Zanten 2007, 111). This shows how difficult it is for the most egalitarian parents to reconcile equality for all with the success of their children in heterogeneous classrooms. The parents' dilemma is, on the one hand, that all children deserve equal opportunities for academic achievement, and on the other, the problems they face if teachers have to pay too much special attention to the 'problem students'. This is a perception that is considered to be strong in France, due not only to the long tradition for academic qualifications, but also to the tradition for limited pedagogical differentiation in the French system (ibid. 121).

In the French schools in the study, the selection of students entails similar processes of social and ethnic segregation. Even though it is mandatory for students to attend their designated local school and for schools to accept all students residing within the area outlined by the catchment area, although more loosely applied in upper-secondary schools, border-crossing mainly serves the upward aspiring middle-ranked social groups who seek to achieve better positions for their children. In fact, the existence of vocational and non-vocational upper secondary schools, of a wide variety of different study programmes with unequal levels of desirability, leads to the departure of the better-off students and produces further inequalities between schools, thereby exacerbating the effects of the institutional segregation of schooling (Schiff 2011, 11).

In the Seine-Saint-Denis district where the schools are located, there are very few neighbourhoods in which residents with an immigrant background are in the majority. While two third of non-European minority households live in neighbourhoods in which they represent less than 30 per cent of the local resident population, these groups of immigrant students are however concentrated in certain schools. Studies of students' experience of streaming at the end of lower secondary school confirm that students with an immigrant background from North Africa and the Sub Sahara, particularly those who have been selected for vocational programmes, often begin their upper-secondary school career with a feeling of having been negatively selected and unjustly constrained in their educational options (Schiff 2010a, 31). From student interviews we learned that low-performing immigrant students are much more likely to fail because they have developed a 'school culture of opposition' due to feelings of both stigmatisation and dissolution at having been placed in programmes for which they did not apply, or which do not correspond to their true aspirations. Especially immigrant girls from a vocational class in the food industry and services described their disappointment at having been 'placed' in what they perceive to be a dead-end programme. Many of them have professional ambitions, which in accordance to the professionals

appeared unrealistic. The immigrant girls, on the other hand, have difficulties to come to terms with their limited educational prospects (Schiff 2010b, 11). Conversely, immigrant boys, who as well have been enrolled into another type of vocational programme than they have wished for appeared less dissatisfied with their lot than the girls, probably because of the much better professional prospects and the possibilities for continuing their studies. Consequently, immigrant students in general, but immigrant girls in particular are more inclined to blame the school system and the teachers for their failure than majority students who are more grateful to the vocational school for keeping them, despite their educational problems and personal failings (Schiff 2010b, 34).

In Denmark there was some tension between the traditional image of consensus and homogeneity, and a tendency within the two schools to move towards a more consumer-oriented philosophy of education, encouraging an individual school identity. In addition, since regulations regarding school catchment areas have been relaxed so that parents can choose schools outside the schools in their area, ‘reputation’ as a ‘marker of identity’ has become of increased significance. In each of the two schools, pedagogical interventions have been developed in order to qualify the school’s identity. Generally, these interventions have taken the form of compensatory approaches in which ‘immigrant’ schools with a substantial number of immigrant students (25 per cent appears to be a ‘magic’ number) are compensated financially through the allocation of extra resources. In recent years, many of these schools have embarked on major image makeover projects in order to attract and retain ethnic majority students. The strategic situation for the one school with 40 per cent of immigrant students present is to make a significant effort to reverse the process of being an ‘immigrant’ school. In order to maintain its good reputation, the school’s strategy is to increase the proportion of ethnic majority students from middle-class backgrounds and, at the same time, to reduce the proportion of immigrant students from 40 to 30 per cent. The school is described as ‘an inclusive school’ that is oriented towards developing a common Danish school culture, with particular attention given to citizenship education and tolerance building. After compulsory school hours the school offers mother-tongue education in Albanian and a homework café for students at all grade levels.

The other school has faced the structure of ethnic and social segregation more strongly; while none of the enrolled students come from outside the catchment area, several of the children with ethnic Danish backgrounds attend schools outside the area. The school promotes itself as ‘whole-day school’ (in Danish: *heldagsskole*) from 8–15 hours that combines schooling and extracurricular activities into one compulsory school day. Moreover, this is a school model of

extended schooling that keeps the ‘exposed’ immigrant students away from the streets and their supposedly deprived homes by engaging them in healthy activities at school. Thus, this model must be understood as a method endorsed by the position of the school in a highly multi-ethnic and economically disadvantaged urban neighbourhood.

It is clear from the Danish case schools that they have indeed become more competitive within the school market for the catchment area; with one school located in the more privileged residential area, and the other, least desirable, school located in a low-income and densely populated immigrant residential area. It is also clear that this struggle for position within the school market has an impact on the student body that, depending on which school they are selected for, has to face a continuous devaluation of their educational opportunities. This leads me to assume that the development of pedagogical interventions is more central to the function of school segregation in the Danish system than to the French system of centralisation and educational differentiation, which traditionally remain impermeable to pressures and influence from civil society, especially those which demand the adaptation of pedagogical interventions in accordance with the particular social and cultural needs of the students. Furthermore, that schools with a relatively high proportion of immigrant students, in the Danish case, is a consequence of the ‘white flight’ that is taking place, generally as a result of the parents’ free choice of schools, and specifically as a result of the institutional reorganisation of schools, i.e. the closure of an ‘immigrant’ school and the merging of two schools; while in the French case these ‘immigrant’ schools are primarily the result of the educational mechanisms of ‘exclusion from within’, namely the system of educational differentiation, streaming and selection of students. In this sense, contextual factors and differences born from the structural inequalities between schools, classes and educational tracks do indeed play a central role in shaping the immigrant students’ perceptions of themselves and their educational and professional opportunities.

### *Residential segregation and ethno-racial stigmatisation*

The residential case study areas are marked by considerable cleavages between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Although the group-specific attributes (such as migration history, religion, ethnicity, culture etc.) may differ among the neighbourhoods studied, the rationale behind the contrasting categories is to a large extent based on the notion of a line of division between the (often white) majority population on one side, and the diverse immigrant population on the other. In Denmark, the term ‘immigrant’ was coined in the 1970s as an administrative category, replacing the previously used term of ‘foreigner’ (Alsmark et al. 2007; Jönsson and Petersen 2010). However, it did not take

long before the term ‘immigrant’ was associated with generalised stereotypical conceptions of ‘the others’ and different types of social problems (Horst & Gitz-Johansen 2010). This line of division between ‘Danes’ and ‘immigrants’, or basically ‘non-Danes’ is present in both the political and public discourse, often in the form of generalised stereotypical images. To be categorised as an ‘immigrant’ is often associated with difficulties in basically all societal arenas, for example the labour market (unemployment and ethnic discrimination), housing (housing segregation and a high concentration in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods) and education (lower grades and a lower probability of transition to higher education). One further implication of this division is that children of immigrants are also considered to be ‘immigrants’, or basically ‘second-generation immigrants’, and now also ‘third-generation immigrants’, even if they were born and have lived their entire lives in Denmark. Since the 1980s the term ‘bilingualism’ has also been used, especially within the educational sector, to illustrate the distinction between ‘Danes’ and ‘non-Danes’ (Thomsen, Moldenhawer & Kallehave 2010, 3).<sup>5</sup>

This line of division is further re-enforced, in the government’s latest publication (March 2018): “One Denmark without parallel societies (*one* society in singular, and *parallel* societies, in plural) - No ghettos in 2030”. As the title indicates, the political aim is to dissolve the vulnerable residential areas called ghettos, by the end of 2030. This must happen through a series of initiatives that in many ways interfere with people’s lives in these exposed residential areas. Politically, the concern is about designated parallel societies, where too many immigrants without education, jobs and sufficient Danish skills are settled. In accordance to the government, this development is based on three reasons: 1) the individual’s immigrant’s own responsibility to stay integrated has been absent, 2) too many refugees have been given residence, and 3), I quote: “We have as society in too many years not provided the necessary requirements. We have had far too low expectations to the refugees and immigrants who came to Denmark. We have not asked

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<sup>5</sup> In a further discussion of racial and territorial stigmatisation it could be fruitful to include “Tingbjerg undersøgelsen” (2017); an investigation of risk-behaviour among 14-15year old students and perceptions in two neighbouring areas, a ‘particularly exposed’ area and another ‘not exposed’ area. One finding across the empirical analysis from questionnaires is that both parents and professionals (teachers, preschool teachers and SSP-staff members) have less expectations to the immigrant students’ attitudes both towards schooling, and their future educational prospects than the students themselves. Moreover, this is more pronounced about immigrant students from ‘the particularly exposed area’ than immigrant students from ‘the not exposed area’. Another finding is that all groups of adults have a significantly higher estimation of how many immigrant students from the ‘particularly exposed’ area who are gang members or are hanging out with gang members, at the same time as this issue is perceived as a bigger problem among teachers, preschool teachers and parents from the ‘the particularly exposed’ area.

adequately firm demands for jobs and self-sufficiency. Therefore, too many immigrants have ended in long-termed passivity" (Government 2018, 5).

In this publication, the government presents 22 initiatives to promote the goal of eliminating ghetto areas. Some initiatives of importance are: 1) "More firm control of who can live in vulnerable residential areas", for example, as a citizen, you will have reduced your cash benefit if you are moving into a ghetto area, 2) "Enhanced police efforts and higher punishment must combat crime and create more security", for example by introducing higher penalties for crime performed in these loaded areas, and 3) "A decent start to life for all children and youngsters", for example, parents who do not lift their parental responsibility will lose "børnechecken" (social children benefit). The logic of these initiatives, I will argue, are important to be included in further studies of schooling and schooling strategies among immigrants. First of all because these initiatives (in a discursive sense) point to a direction of what Wacquant has described as the neoliberal state's articulation of an institutional logic where the "stubborn" individual is subjected to a de-socialised discipline of labour. And secondly, by stigmatising and stamping a group of people who is already minoritized and racialised, these initiatives accentuate the forces of territorial stigmatization.

In France the distinction between 'us' and 'the others' is clearly significant. However, due to the Republican principle of equality, which opposes any form of differentiation based on ethnicity (Brinbaum & Cebolla-Boado 2007, 446) references to cultural, racial or social categories are subsumed by references to residential categories, and by the major distinction being made between the *jeunes des cités* ('ghetto' youth) and the others (Schiff 2010a, 78). In fact, urban identities synthesise all the various dimensions of immigrant youth's social, ethnic, and even academic, identity, while at the same time permitting a degree of mingling between various ethnic groups, since membership is acquired and not transmitted (Schiff 2010a, 77). Even though there is some incidence of immigrant students making distinctions in their social relations based on ethno-racial categories of 'black', 'Muslim', or 'Arab', ethno-racial tensions never manifest themselves in a 'pure' form independently of other dimensions of social relations involving distinctions based on such factors as residence, academic performance, style and immigration.

Nobles (2010) questions whether ethno-racial identities actually do play a role in recent developments in France's banlieues. She claims that Wacquant overlooks the role of public and political opinion, certainly during the 2005 riots, and argues that ethno-racial identities are growing in political and social significance in France. Tissot (2007) goes one step further by

claiming that the serious difficulties that immigrants and residents in the suburbs continue to face in relation to education and the labour market were never described in terms of racism and discrimination, but in terms of the problems they supposedly presented for the French Republican model of integration, i.e. given the principle of non-differentiation of citizens on the basis of their ethnic origin. According to Tissot, this 'model of integration' is blurring the objective structures of ethno-racial inequalities. Instead Tissot argues, the 'crucial feature in France has been the refusal of addressing the obstacles race creates for the racialised people.' (ibid. 368). Varying experiences of ethno-racial discrimination, both argue, should be part of the stigma attached to the image of the 'ghetto' youth that combines all the processes of differentiation and exclusion that impede their prospects for social inclusion.

In the Danish case, 'ethnicity' with reference to the significance of cultural difference is more outspoken. When ethnic categories are associated with the 'immigrant' category they become a burden and a label of failure and disintegration. From the perspective of immigrant students' non-assimilative experiences of schooling, it is clear that they are trying to escape the general stigmatisation of the 'criminal trouble-making immigrant'. Generally, this stigmatisation relies on the grounds of the deprivation regime (Horst & Gitz-Johansen 2010, 147). When ethnic categories, on the other hand, are related to the residential category, in which the immigrant neighbourhood becomes a major distinction made between 'us' (inside the 'ghetto') and 'the other' (outside the 'ghetto'), the school stands out as a zone of exception (Moldenhawer & Padovan-Özdemir 2011, 10). Although some immigrant students describe inter-ethnic interaction outside school, primarily in connection with sports activities, they form a residential community that draws on distinctions based on 'us' (inside the residential area) and 'the other' (outside the residential area). In this specific local environment, the ethnically diverse school may function as a sanctuary from the negative representations of immigrants in public and political discourses, especially when it comes to social interaction and the social well-being of the students (Moldenhawer, Kallehave and Hansen 2010, 57).

Most of the immigrant students in the French school cases come from disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods. In this situation, however, the schools appeared as environments that are relatively well protected from the harsh realities of urban life, and furthermore as an important stabilising element in the students' lives, even though many students legitimately feel that they have been relegated to the bottom of the academic hierarchy. During interviews students often mentioned problems relating to drug dealing, gang violence, police brutality and controls, very uncomfortable housing conditions, delinquency and muggings, which made life within the

confines of the school, appear relatively peaceful (Schiff 2010a, 56). Thus, an important finding is that the immigrant students seem to feel less affected by negative comparisons between neighbourhoods, schools, classes, race and class within the *banlieues* than by the stigma they experience 'from the outside' where social, ethno-racial and residential distinctions are more significant. To conclude, 'In the Parisian suburbs segregation paradoxically shelter young people from confrontation with the 'other' which may remind them of their disadvantaged status' (ibid. 56-57).

## **Conclusion and discussion**

The purpose of this paper has been to study racial inequality in education and the problems associated with territorial stigmatized educational contexts. The French and Danish cases were selected for an in-depth analysis of socio-racial-ethnic differences in education as well as the problems associated with disadvantaged and multicultural urban and educational contexts.

To conclude, beyond differences and similarities between the country-specific cases, social and racial structures once they are inscribed in mental structures are repeated via schooling in immigrant and ethnically mixed areas, even though the schools themselves stand out as a 'safe haven'. This is depicted in the selected environments, which are most clearly considered to be areas of possible threats; areas distorted from 'places' to 'spaces' (Wacquant 2007: 70) that become social forces of marginalisation. The social basis for being part of and participating fully in society appears to be lacking, due to the history of immigration and the historical structure of social forces that is concentrated there. In this setting, the school paradoxically offers innovative attempts at various forms of 'inclusive' interventions along gradients of inequality.

As a consequence of being trapped in schools and districts that are widely perceived as 'problem areas' immigrant students cannot ignore the symbolic force of the territorial stigma. Yet despite the stigma attached to the residential area, similar young immigrant forces across country-specific differences can be demonstrated. We have seen how they have applied strategies of symbolic self-protection, where the residential and school context stands out as a zone of exception; or have reinforced the experienced differences, disadvantaged positions and division lines between themselves and their ethnic majority peers. This conclusion suggests some important points taken from Wacquant's overall argument that territorial stigmatisation is a central dimension of inequality and urban marginality in both the USA and Europe. However, the persistence of the growing salience of ethno-racial divisions and tensions in the disadvantaged

and multicultural urban areas studied may also indicate the main factors accounting for the social potency of ethno-racial classification in both Denmark and France. To some extent, our conclusion indeed suggests that a further discussion of ethnic stigma together with territorial stigma, merely alters one more obstacle in the path to schooling.

With the present extension of mandatory schooling in many European countries and the corresponding entry into the academic enterprise of social categories that previously excluded themselves, or were in practice excluded, subtle forms of ‘inclusion from within’ have increased (Bourdieu et al. 1999, pp. 421-26). One of the most paradoxical effects of this process of ‘democratisation’ has been the most disadvantaged and previously excluded students’ discovery of the conservative functions of the supposedly equalising and liberating school system. By prolonging and consequently spreading out the process of elimination, segmentation and differentiation, the school system becomes a permanent home for potential outcasts, who bring to it the contradictions and conflicts that are associated with a type of education that is an end in itself. After an extended school career that often entails considerable sacrifice, the new and most culturally disadvantaged student population runs the risk of ending up with a devalued degree.

Strongly demonstrated in the French school cases, the exclusion seems to be most aggravated among the ‘problem students’ in the sense that they have ‘had their chance’, and because social identity also more obviously tends to be defined by the school system. Clearly, this educational dilemma between a common ethos of ‘schooling for all’, on the one hand, and patterns of ‘exclusion from within’ on the other, has created even more problems for ethnic minority students, who are trapped in a school system that is ‘regarded more as an involuntary recipient of the negative effects of discrimination in areas over which it has no jurisdiction or control (housing inequalities, avoidance strategies by parents, discrimination in vocational employment schemes, etc.) than as a factor of producing ethnic and racial inequalities’ (Schiff 2011:2). This in fact calls for future research into the dysfunction of school institutions, which are relegated to a separate space of institutional social inferiority and immobility that is in blatant violation of the ideology of unitarist citizenship.



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